

Monroe Learning Academy
Monroe Public Schools

Program

The Monroe Learning Academy is located at Custer Elementary School and services students in grades K-6. The academy is open from 4:00 to 6:00 Monday through Thursday from March 31, 2003 to May 22, 2003 with the possibility of extending services through the summer in conjunction with the elementary summer school program that runs June 23 through August 1, 8:15 to 12:15 five days a week. Implementation of the academy in the fall is contingent upon its success this spring.

Individual tutoring in math and reading is available during this seven week academy program as well as small group instruction in these two subject areas. The math and reading programs offered are aligned with the district curriculum which is based on the state content standards and benchmarks.

The reading program utilizes developmentally appropriate strategies including read alouds and opportunities for reading and writing, reading and exploring words, and reading and responding. Comprehension strategies include making connections, making predictions, monitoring understanding, visualizing, questioning, and retelling. Pre and post testing involves use of miscue analysis with identification of omissions, insertions, substitutions and self-corrections along with comprehension questions and retelling rubrics. A variety of leveled materials K-6 is available to teachers.

The math program includes daily work on number sense, basic operations, problem solving, patterning, algebraic thinking, geometry, and data analysis. Games, practice activities, and make and take activities support daily activities with numbers. There is a pre and post test for each grade level K-6.

Teachers working with individuals and small groups will have access to all of the math and reading materials. Teachers working with individual students may select and integrate any of these materials with work individual students may bring from the regular classroom. Communication between the academy teachers and the regular classroom teachers will be encouraged, particularly with students attending for individual help.

Staff

The staff for the Monroe Learning Academy consists of a cadre of certified elementary teachers and a director. The director is an experienced classroom teacher selected for her knowledge of good classroom practice and for her organizational skills. Cadre teachers may elect to work two hours each of the four days or a minimum of two days, two hours each day. An instructional assistant is also available during each session to provide help monitoring students between sessions and helping with materials preparation.

Program Effectiveness

The Monroe Learning Academy is new, but the curriculum and teaching strategies are similar to what has been used by the district during the elementary summer school program. Students participating in the six week summer program have shown significant

gains this past year with 89% showing growth in math from pre to post test, 61% showing growth in oral reading, and 65% showing growth in reading comprehension. The district uses the Qualitative Reading Inventory to assess overall student progress in reading and 34% of the students participating in the summer program (grades 1-5) showed growth of one or more QRI passage levels from spring to fall. Forty-four percent showed no change and remained steady for QRI passages levels. This is an indication that the materials and strategies used for the summer program are effective in raising and maintaining student skill levels. It is hoped that using these same materials and instructional practices during the academy, even though for a shorter amount of time but in smaller groups and individually, will result in the same positive gains.

Evaluation/Monitoring

The effectiveness of the Monroe Learning Academy will be monitored by reviewing individual students' progress on pre and post tests for both mathematics and reading. Each student entering the program, whether for small group or individual assistance is pre and post tested in both subject areas. Data from these assessments will be compiled to gain an overall picture of program effectiveness. This information along with teacher summaries of individual student progress will be communicated to the parents and classroom teachers of all participating students at the end of the seven week period in addition to ongoing communication to parents from cadre teachers regarding weekly progress during the session.

Pricing for Supplemental Services

Students enrolling for individual tutoring are charged \$30 per hour. Students enrolling for small group sessions (5 students per group), are charged \$20 per hour. Title I students enrolling from Monroe Public Schools receive services with no charge. As part of the Monroe Learning Academy program, enrichment classes are also offered and are self-supporting through an hourly fee for all students. Transportation is the responsibility of the parent unless students can be accommodated to the academy with existing bus runs from other schools in the district.

Future of Monroe Learning Academy

The Monroe Learning Academy is operating from March 31 to May 22, 2003. It may continue over the summer as part of the elementary summer school program if there is a need. The Academy will reopen as an after school program in the fall if the program is deemed successful this spring. An added piece for the academy in the fall may be the inclusion of a diagnostic reading clinic sponsored by Eastern Michigan University. This is still in the planning stages.